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THE AMERICAN PRIEST

THE AMERICAN PRIEST

BY

REV. GEORGE T. SCHMIDT
OF THE SCRANTON DIOCESE



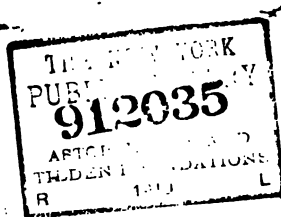
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DEDICATED TO
REV. HERMAN ZIMMERMANN
OF THE DIOCESE OF BUFFALO, N. Y.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

IN offering this little volume to the Priests of America, I have been guided by two great motives: the first is my love for that great Church in which I am a priest forever, the holy Roman Catholic Church; the second is my love for the land of my birth, the glorious United States of America. Loving both, I cannot desire anything more than that both should continue to thrive, and that my country, sanctified by the teachings of the Church, may, for ages to come, be the home of religious liberty, the haven of the oppressed, the guiding beacon of the nations.

THE AUTHOR.

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THE AMERICAN PRIEST

CHAPTER I

AT HOME

IT is demanded neither by the nature of his work nor by the dictates of his conscience that the priest should be a hermit in his own home. In larger parishes, where several priests occupy the same domicile, the rectory should be a home for all. Imagine our great teaching and preaching Orders trying to thrive without the community or recreation rooms. Now the work of secular priests of the same parish is so co-ordinated that efficiency, alone, would demand frequent intercourse between pastor and curates. However, there is a nobler motive for them to foster home relations in the rectory. It is the need of mutual aid in fighting off the evil spirit. Let us face the facts as they are. Priests, and especially

younger priests, need comradeship, they need society. They have had a number of loyal friends in the seminary. The meetings with these "chums" were frequent, as were the opportunities for interchange of ideas. Now, suddenly, they are taken from the seminary and given a position in a strange community. Has their need for social intercourse vanished? Not at all. They now need the sustaining arm of a friend more than ever before.

Now if the pastor, as is often the case, frowns on what he calls "too great a familiarity with superiors," one of two things directly result. Either the young priest seeks comradeship with laymen or he does without it. Friendship between priests and laymen is, indeed, greatly to be desired. But the intimacy of comradeship is, at best, unwise. If, on the other hand, the young priest simply does without intimate friends and associates, we may look for inefficiency, dissatisfaction with himself and his surroundings, in a word, unhappiness.

It is all very well to assume the tone of the oracle and to declare that the priest must bring sacrifices and that one of these is the loss of home comforts. Surely, the assistant is more than a boarder in the rectory. He cannot be devoting all his spare time to study. Nor should his senior be a recluse in the tomb-like silence of his library. Such relations between priests of the same household are conducive neither to the welfare of the body nor to that of the soul.

But there are also times when the priest should be alone. The world is very exacting in her demands upon men of the world. Brains have superseded brawn; the unlettered must be content to perform the meanest tasks, and to have the smallest word in the government of themselves. But, if more brains and better education are demanded in the citizen, must not the priest, who by his sacred office is to be a leader of men, be a man of high intelligence and mature knowledge? A smattering of Theology and of Church History, a little

piety, the observance of the commandments, and the ability to raise money, may have been all that was demanded of the American priest four or five decades ago. But that time is past, if it ever did exist. To-day, when the world is in travail, and no one knows just what she will bring forth, the spirit of the times calls for men who are familiar with world problems and are able to impart their knowledge to others. Men are needed whose training is built upon the sound bed-rock of Christian philosophy. Men are needed whose steps will be guided by a thorough acquaintance with the spiritual and temporal needs of the times. The American priest must, therefore, be a good theologian. If he would occupy his rightful place as a leader of men,—if he would save his people from moral shipwreck on the reefs of socialism and rationalism, he must also be an ardent student of sociology.

“The lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth, be-

cause he is the angel of the Lord of hosts.”¹ If ever the priest was called upon to be the custodian of true wisdom, that time is our own day. You will find the successful lawyer at his books day after day. The skilled physician seeks every opportunity for research and advancement. Should the priest, alone, be content with his seminary training?

I remember a rebuke that was administered to me by my bishop when I was in second year theology. I had come home for the summer and paid a visit to the Ordinary. The Right Reverend Bishop inquired about my progress in the seminary. Boastfully I answered: “Well, Bishop, I have finished canon law.” I was not able to say another word. The Bishop at once interjected: “My dear young man, you will never finish the study of canon law.” But how many priests might there be who are not convinced that they have finished the study of dogmatic and moral theology, Church History, canon law and the Sacred Scriptures?

¹ Mal. ii. 7.

In the solitude and silence of his study the American priest should not only add to his knowledge of theology and related branches, but he should also equip himself with facts and figures on the problems of the day. He should be all to all.

We cannot fail to recognize the importance of leadership in the world. It is not only a fact that a chaos of divergent opinions, conflicting doctrines and contradictory practices, are daily spread before the eyes of Americans, like goods on a bargain-counter,—but men and women of genius, and of more than ordinary talent, are displaying these goods, presenting these opinions and doctrines. The soap-box orator is, after all, a gifted man; the sponsors of International Bible Study are no mean intellects; the agnostic is capable of making his unbelief somewhat plausible; even the slush-press is equipped with some facts and much fiction—in a word, much energy is brought into play by our enemies in gathering knowledge and information suitable to their pro-

gram. Can the American priest expect to cope with these adversaries, can he arm his people with efficient means of defense, if he is not versed in the false doctrines and heresies of the times as well as acquainted with their antidotes? But this will require much study on the part of the priest.

CHAPTER II

WITH HIS FELLOW-PRIESTS

ALL study and no recreation, no intercourse with his friends, makes the priest an egoist. "For the bow cannot possibly stand always bent, nor can human nature or human frailty subsist without some lawful recreation." Priests at odds! One priest not on speaking terms with another! The layman has observed this and it has pained him to note that his non-Catholic neighbor has also observed it. Yet out of the past we hear the voice of the Master: "By this shall all men know that you are My Disciples, if you have love one for another."¹ Differences of opinion are to be expected among the clergy, also human nature with all its attending weaknesses. But enmity, hatred, and jealousy must painfully offend the faithful.

¹ John xiii. 35.

I will not presume to suggest a panacea for these evils, but believe that more comradeship on the part of many priests would go a great way toward ameliorating conditions. Is it not a fact that, in many parochial residences, the routine of daily life is much the same as in a boarding-house? The curate is given to understand that he is to have no preferences in the matter of diet. Under no conditions, except on urgent business, is he to enter the "sanctum" of the pastor. A friendly chat and smoke with the pastor is to be considered an event, and is rarely indulged in, possibly when a mutual acquaintance happens to be enjoying or enduring the hospitality of the house. Business and parochial matters are discussed mainly at dinner, where they ruin digestion. Needless to say, there is no mutual co-operation in the performance of parish labors.

Let it not be gleaned from this that the blame is all the pastor's when friction exists in the parish rectory. The assistant must not be ridiculous and unreasonable in his demands.

He must ever remember that the pastor is his superior, that he is usually a man of long experience. If the rector goes half way toward making living conditions in the house tolerable, no less can be expected from the assistant.

But what about the priest's relation to the rectors and assistants of other parishes? There should be no distinction made as to race, age, or talent. A priest's residence ought to be open to every other priest in good standing. A jolly smile, and a vigorous handshake should welcome the Pole as well as the Lithuanian, the German as well as the Irishman. For after all, we are not Poles, Germans etc., we are Americans all, and we all are engaged in the same sublime occupation, the establishing of the Kingdom of God in the hearts of Americans. Our enemies are numerous enough, and the barriers to our progress sufficiently great. "A house divided against itself will fall." The American priesthood divided against itself will never accomplish its great work in this country.

In one of the first years of my labors, I was assigned by the Right Reverend Bishop to a large parish as assistant. I called upon the rector of a neighboring parish to introduce myself. This is the conversation that ensued: The pastor: "Why, I met you last week." I answered: "No, Father, this is the first time that I have the pleasure." The pastor: "Well, there was some one here last week by the name of Fish or Smith; some small fry, at any rate." The remainder of the conversation was as cordial as this auspicious beginning. There was no invitation for a second call—the very atmosphere seemed to whisper: "Smallpox, keep out!" This venerable pastor may have intended no offense; neither was he looking for any new acquaintances.

There was a time when our polyglot priesthood was made up of men born in different climes and nurtured amid vastly dissimilar surroundings. But the priests of America today are mostly native born. They love the freedom of our land, they are willing to give

their lives for that freedom. If, then, all are working in so sublime a cause, in a country that we all love, why not work together as brothers and friends in Christ?

But this chapter would, manifestly, be incomplete without a word on the relation of older priests to the newly ordained. The neophyte, just emerged from the sheltering walls of the seminary, is the highest conception of the ideal priest. His heart, still warm with the memories of that solemn moment when the bishop consecrated him a priest forever,—imbued with the lofty ideals that God's own religion alone can implant in youthful minds,—he has gone forth like a second St. Paul "to renew all things in Christ." He has "hitched his wagon to a star," he sees only the wonderful, the sublime in the Catholic priesthood,—he is, as yet, unaware of the rudeness, the egoism that he may find in some priests. Oh, that older men could pierce the boyish jollity of his exterior and see the purity of his heart, the loftiness of his motives. He may

be an idealist, his thoughts may wander far above this practical, material, sinful world. He will "come to earth" sooner or later, but misguided is the priest who "brings him down with a thud." God bless the older man who takes kindly to the neophyte, refrains from ridiculing his idealism, and, above all, does not give him scandal by superficial attendance to duty or neglect of the same. Kind words, paternal interest, patience and good example: these are the things that encourage the young priest and keep him good and zealous long after the sacramental oils have dried on his hands.

CHAPTER III

ZEAL

WEBSTER defines zeal as "a passionate ardor in the pursuit of anything." The priest has the noblest objective that can be given to man. He is the physician sent by God to prescribe a positive remedy for the cancerous wounds of society. He is guardian and administrator of the greatest treasures, the inexhaustible wealth of the sacraments. His position in God's creation is that of guide and helper. He holds out the guiding, the helping hand to sore-footed pilgrims, he bathes their wounds of sin in the purifying waters of penance, he stanches these wounds and pours upon them the healing balm of charity. His work, his labors are all for man, to bring man happiness, not the ephemeral happiness of the world, but the true, the unending joy for which

man was created. Christ redeemed the world, the priest must bring redemption to mankind. And just as Our Saviour knew no hardship and no suffering too great when there was question of bringing happiness to man, so also the "alter Christus" must evince a passionate ardor in the pursuit of this same purpose,—he must be zealous.

His zeal must not be confined to his work in the pulpit, it should manifest itself in his every undertaking.

The house of God reflects the zeal of the priest. Cleanliness and tidiness, order and discipline are indispensable. Torn and shabby vestments, soiled and wrinkled linens, are but indications of the priest's slovenliness in other matters. The zealous priest provides the best that his parish can afford in vestments, altar linens, and sacred vessels. Nor is he contented with any kind of statues, pictures, or stations of the cross. He realizes that great care in providing for the needs of the church, and keen interest in the cleanliness and order of things

about the altar, are looked upon by the faithful as evidences of the faith that is in him.

And if you go from the church to the rectory, here too must be found evidence of the zealous priest. A raft of insipid magazines and spicy novels will at once give a clew to the home activities of the cleric. But zeal, ardor for souls demands more than this. The little time that the active American priest has for himself is most precious. He has a host of responsibilities; almost abnormal activity is demanded of him. He must, therefore, provide his heart and mind with whatever knowledge will be of aid to him in the glorious work that has been allotted to him.

Then too, true zeal calls for frequent communion with his Master in prayer. What better preparation for the day's labors than the morning meditation? His lamp has, indeed, been well filled with oil at the seminary, but if he should continue to "let his light shine" the store of fuel must be replenished.

If you meet the Catholic clergyman on the

street, his zeal will be manifested by his kindness to his fellow-men. Pride and vanity do not fit into his make-up. He has a smile and a greeting for the poor as well as for the rich. The sight of injustice and suffering arouses his sympathy. But, is this zeal? Indeed it is. He is disposing human beings for friendship with God.

If you should happen to be in the home of the sick when the priest arrives, his bearing, his reverence for the Blessed Sacrament, his earnestness and sincerity in administering the sacred rites, his devout recital of the prayers—in fine, his every action will proclaim his zeal.

When he appears in the pulpit, the true priest of God gives proof that he deems it a tremendous responsibility to preach the word of God. That he has carefully prepared his sermon, that he takes pains to bring home to his people God's eternal truths, that he is careful to make himself understood by all—all this is nothing more than tangible proof of the zeal,

the passionate ardor for souls that fires his breast.

The zealous priest, moreover, does not shirk his duties in the confessional. The long hours do not make him irascible; the fatigue is gladly borne. He realizes that here in the sacred tribunal of Penance it is his privilege to look directly into the hearts of men, to see their temptations, their weaknesses, their sorrows and their joys. He knows that if he allows impatience to master him, his next penitent may be a man or woman sorely in need of his kindness. He discovers his great opportunity to enkindle in cold hearts the love of God, and to inflame them with a burning ardor for the glory of the Most High.

But priestly zeal cannot be restrained by the boundaries of a parish or the limits of a city or state. Like the fire of the forest it knows no boundaries, it leaps over hill and dale until it no longer finds material for its consuming ardor. The priest of zeal wanders in spirit to the small churches and shacks of the

home missions, he crosses the vast expanse of the waters and beholds his fellow-priests as they toil and labor in foreign lands under the most arduous conditions, among the lowliest of human kind. Here is material for his ardor. What inestimable good he can do to save souls by aiding the missions and cultivating the missionary spirit among his people!

The American priest who is inclined to take life easy might profitably read the book of the Rev. J. J. McGlinchey, D.D., "The Workers Are Few." Here again we see duplicated the lives of the great missionaries, St. Francis Xavier and St. Francis of Assisi. Men and women court danger, welcome hardships and suffering if but the opportunity is given them to save immortal souls.

The zealous priest is the glory of God. His life, his work is the living demonstration of the divine origin of his religion. He radiates joy and good will, he encourages and convinces, he attracts with an irresistible power the souls of men to their God and Creator.

CHAPTER IV

IN THE PULPIT

1. **P**REPARATION. If I may presume to suggest the most important part in the priest's preparation for a pulpit discourse, I would say that it is love of God and love of His people. "If I speak with the tongue of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."¹ If the priest prepares a sermon under the guidance of profane motives,—if his endeavors reach out for the plaudits of his hearers and the possible admiration of his superiors,—he will, indeed, become as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. Demosthenes disdained the applause of the rabble; but if he succeeded in moving his hearers to action along the lines that he had suggested, he considered his efforts eminently satisfactory.

¹ I Cor. xiii. 1.

The preparation for a sermon requires prayerful meditation on the matter to be discussed. Circumstances and the talents of the preacher would determine whether the preparation should be one of days or hours. Certain it is, that extemporaneous public discussion of the profound truths of our religion is to be condemned. I have heard a priest say: "During the summer months we do not have regular sermons, but merely have five-minute talks." They were "talks" and nothing more. And it is to be feared that some of the "regular" sermons were nothing more than "talks."

Again some aver that the truths of God are so beautiful and so fulgent that they need not be enhanced by the embellishments that man can give. And yet, who can deny that beauty of diction and the art of oratory bring out the full glorious radiance of the gems of truth? The "*ars dicendi*" should be made the subject of thorough study by the American priest.

I once happened to come into the study of an eminent pulpit orator as he was making the

remote preparation for a sermon. He held a book in his hand, and was deeply interested in its perusal. That book, strange to say, was Homer's "Iliad." I subsequently discovered that he always read good poetry before beginning his preparation of a sermon. I do not doubt but that, being a very good and zealous priest, prayer, above all, was considered indispensable in his preparation. However, the reading of poetry was apparent in his diction. He knew how to hold the rapt attention of his hearers by an abundance of similes and comparisons. He could sway their minds and their hearts by presenting to them the truths of God, the threats and appeals of the Saviour decked out in the fascinating garb of beautiful language. Poetry is the handmaid of oratory. And, after all, was not the language of Our Saviour the language of poetry?

But what about the length of the sermon? Does the average American profit by hearing a sermon that lasts more than thirty minutes? I believe not. At a Forty Hours' Devotion

conducted by a good pious priest, the sermon began at about seven o'clock and was still going strong at nine o'clock. I feared to glance into the body of the church and cannot say whether the faces of the faithful mirrored admiration or resignation. But in the sanctuary there was no doubt as to the effects of the long "grind"—the attending priests were asleep. A well-known bishop, who has since gone to his reward, was so zealous that there was simply no end to his sermon. He was loved by his people everywhere, but they groaned in dismay when he made it apparent that he was going to address them.

In a sermon of twenty-five or thirty minutes the speaker can so arrange his matter that the various points and their connection may easily be followed by the people. Then there will be some hope that one or the other will carry home with him something of benefit to his immortal soul. But the lengthy sermon, especially if the division of points is complicated, may have its use as a narcotic, but as a

vehicle for bringing home to man God's eternal truths it leaves much to be desired.

2. **DELIVERY.** Some one has said that the best sermon can be ruined by poor delivery, and that the poorest sermon can be made acceptable by clever presentation. Certain it is that a good, convincing delivery is far better than the style of the essayist. In America the colleges and seminaries endeavor to train the candidates for the priesthood in the art of oratorical delivery. But the power of eloquence must ever be restrained to its purposes. It must be the means of holding the attention of the hearers; it must give evidence of the profound conviction the preacher holds of the truth of the words he utters. Oratorical delivery must never degenerate into becoming the means of raising the orator above his theme, or of attracting more attention to his person than to his sermon. Theatrical oratory is out of place in the house of God.

Many years ago an eminent lecturer toured the principal cities of a certain country with an

illustrated lecture on the Life of Christ. His lecture was very fine, the pictures magnificent, but the orator's style of delivery was dramatic in the extreme. The result was that all the applause went to the speaker. And when the end came, and the speaker, in a voice hoarse from exertion, uttered the last words of his lecture, and staggered off the stage,—the scene of the crucifixion was flashed on the screen. It was the famous crucifixion scene in the Passion Play of Oberammergau. But the audience knew not the scene, nor its significance—they had burst forth into deafening applause, shrill whistling and cat-calls. What an ending for a lecture on the life of Our Saviour!

Then, again, it is puzzling to determine what a priest hopes to accomplish when he raves in the pulpit like a madman, shouts the nouns and verbs of his sentences, but barely breathes the articles and prepositions. He may produce fear in the hearts of the more timid; they do not understand what he is say-

ing, but they know that something has gone wrong. What a travesty on the art of sacred oratory!

The delivery of a sermon must be virile and dignified. Great care should be exercised in enunciating the words, so that they can be understood throughout the church. I have known priests who boasted that they found no difficulty in speaking in certain large churches when, as a matter of fact, it was a common complaint among their people that they could not be understood beyond the first twenty benches in the church.

But, as was said in the beginning of this chapter, the love of God and of His people must be the priest's first preparation for a sermon. If his motive, in ascending the pulpit, is the salvation of immortal souls, he will avoid those abuses that tend to drive men away from church, and will employ those means best suited for the winning of souls. If his motives are lofty and pure, and if he has taken pains in the preparation of his sermon, the words that God

addressed to Moses will be applicable to him:
"Go, therefore, and I will be in thy mouth,
and I will teach thee what thou shalt speak."¹

¹ Exodus iv, 12.

CHAPTER V

LOYALTY

THE Church has often been compared to a great army, battling against the vile hordes of hell. Now, the efficiency of an army is not so much dependent upon vast numbers of men and abundant stores of ammunition, as upon its morale. Great numbers of men, fully equipped, perfectly trained in military tactics, are nevertheless worthless in war if they are not united and bound together as one by courage and zeal for their cause. Disloyalty to the country and to superior officers tells the tale of many a retreat and of many a crushing defeat in the history of the battles of nations.

The army of Christ doing battle with a mighty foe must not only marshal all its forces, it must not only be fully equipped and

accoutered,—but it must advance as one man, with the courage, the zeal that is born of the deepest sense of loyalty to those in charge.

The priest, reasonably, expects fidelity from his parishioners. But the priests, who are the captains and lieutenants in Christ's army, must also be loyal one to another. It seems to be a passion with some of the faithful to discuss their parish priest's failings and shortcomings. They welcome the visits of the assistant with the hope of engaging him in conversation prejudicial to the pastor's interest. But the young lieutenant should remember that his rank and the ethics of his profession demand loyalty to his captain. There are perhaps times when the young priest, who has endured much at the hands of an unreasonable superior, feels that he must unburden his soul. But it is highly imprudent, and essentially disloyal, if he seeks sympathy and comfort from the parishioners. On the other hand, loyalty demands that the pastor refrain from divulging the weaknesses of his assistant. This may

seem a small and trifling matter. But it is not. Parishes have been disrupted; cliques have been formed; most sinful and dangerous language has been indulged in—because priests were too ready with the lash of their tongue. An aged pastor, who had given the best years of his life to his people, who had labored for them untiringly, hoped to spend the autumn of his earthly existence in rest and comparative ease. A younger man, unmindful of the years of hard labor that had gone before, viciously attacked what he called the pastor's uselessness, and openly called upon the people to take steps to have him removed from office. The principals in this case have long since departed this life, and very few of the clergy will recognize them in this narration, for the mantle of charity covers this as many other sins. But here is a case in point of the dire results of disloyalty.

Propriety further demands that the priest be loyal to his bishop. The Ordinary probably expects to be "weighed in the balance and

found wanting" at the informal gatherings of priests. But, even then, harsh criticism is productive of much harm, and may be the beginning of insubordination and faithlessness of a more serious nature. Open attacks upon the Ordinary, public refusal of obedience and allegiance, have ever been attended with unwholesome consequences. Time and again whole communities have been scandalized by insubordination of priests to their rightful superiors. The attending result has been not only the loss of many Catholics directly concerned, but the eternal loss of many who, otherwise, might have felt themselves drawn to the true faith. And in this, as well as in many other evils, small beginnings lead to great endings.

The layman, who does not enjoy intimacy with the bishop of the diocese, is, nevertheless, interested in his person and character. He will surely inquire as to his abilities, learning, piety, etc. A kind and charitable word on the part of the priest will cost no effort, and will

indelibly be impressed on the mind of the layman. That, after all, is for the good of the army of Christ. Whereas, publication of the unknown imperfections of the bishop is uncalled for, and must weaken the efficiency of our battle-array.

Unswerving allegiance to our great Leader and Commander-in-Chief, to Our Saviour and Lord, is so well understood and taken for granted that it needs no further comment. But this allegiance must also extend to His Vicar, the Holy Father, the General of our forces. From the headquarters of the General, orders and instructions are sent forth to every part of the vast army. If these orders are carefully and conscientiously carried out by officers and subordinates, unity of action and oneness of purpose will be the result. If but one officer, however, fails to carry out the injunctions of the General, that unity is impossible. Harm and perhaps disaster will result.

Let us consider, for instance, the matter of

recent marriage legislation. The orders are clear and the regulations easily understood. Loyalty to the Holy Father would demand that the priest carry out these instructions. But alas, what discrepancies occur in the method of applying the laws! This neglect of rules may be looked upon as a small matter. But, in reality, such conduct frustrates the purpose of the legislation.

The priest can ill afford to disobey the rules emanating from Rome. For the lay people notice these disloyalties readily, and they are at a loss to account for them. They approach their parish priest for an explanation. What explanation can he give? Again untold harm is done to our cause.

Love, respect, and great loyalty to our Holy Father must, then, be a cardinal virtue with every priest. He is the General, and whether he be a wise and prudent Leo, an humble and saintly Pius, or a God-given Benedict, next to Christ Himself he merits our greatest loyalty and unswerving allegiance.

CHAPTER VI

IN THE PAROCHIAL SCHOOL

1. **N**CESSITY OF PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS.
Ten thousand, four hundred and sixty churches with resident pastors in the United States, and only five thousand, seven hundred and eighty-eight parochial schools!¹ Allowing for the churches that are prevented by circumstances from having schools, the appalling fact still remains that there are very, very many parishes in which, without sufficient reason, the education of the young is left to the godless schools of the state. I have heard it time and again from the lips of priests, "I do not believe in parochial schools," or "We get along just as well without them." But the pastor who glories in the magnificence of his church-building, who boastfully shows you

¹ Official Catholic Directory for 1919.

about the well-appointed rooms of his rectory—should bow his head in shame if he cannot lead you through the class-rooms of a well-equipped parochial school.

Religion, piety, and virtue are not inherited as are some traits of character. A father may be an exemplary Catholic, but if his children are reared in schools where the curriculum excludes all mention of Christian beliefs and practices; if they are obliged to associate freely with the children of free-thinkers, atheists and heretics,—can we expect any other result than a harmful coloring of their views in matters of religion, a carelessness in the performance of Christian duties, weakness in faith and ultimate unbelief?

But one might object, the child can receive instruction and counsel from its parents; and besides we have our Sunday Schools. It is, indeed, desirable that parents instruct their children. But do they do it? How many Catholic fathers and mothers have the time to impart religious instruction to their offspring?

How many have the ability? And as for the Sunday Schools—their work is, indeed, very salutary, but it is merely supplementary. In themselves, Sunday Schools cannot prepare boys and girls adequately to combat the host of tendencies that threaten to draw them away from God, into the maelstrom of materialism.

If the American priest would have the children of his parish become stanch defenders of the Faith,—if he would have them, in after years, to be loyal fathers and mothers,—he must guide their early education—he must instill into their young and receptive hearts the fear of God and the sound principles of Catholic morality—he must surround them with environments that tend to strengthen and develop their faith, increase their hope in a future reward for present sacrifices, and enkindle in their hearts the fire of divine love.

Conditions in our country make the need of parochial schools imperative. But they should, by all means, be free schools. It is not necessary to recount here the heavy burdens

borne by Catholics in support of the state schools. Nor need priests be told that the father of a large family finds it very difficult to pay tuition for all his children. Every priest recognizes the desirability of free parochial schools. But there seems to be a difficulty in determining how this is to be brought about. However, it may be taken as a general rule, that a parish that can afford to have a parochial school can also maintain it without exacting tuition fees.

A small parish of one hundred families has maintained a free parochial school with three teaching Sisters for the past fifteen years. The parish in question has the lowest pew-rent rate of any in the diocese, and there are absolutely no extra assessments or collections for school maintenance. Now, if a small parish, which in this case is absolutely dependent upon its own people for revenues, supports a free school,—why cannot the city parish do the same? It is, to be sure, very generous of the priest to ease the burdens of his people, but

God always recognizes such generosity and blesses the parish.

2. SUPERINTENDENT OF THE SCHOOL.

Should the priest teach secular branches of education in the school? Generally speaking, he should not. The priest is not trained for the task of imparting secular knowledge to the young. Besides, we have our religious teaching Orders. Moreover, the priest has a host of other duties to perform that prevent a lengthier stay in the class-room than, perhaps, the daily religious instruction of one hour. The priest-teacher in the parochial school either will neglect his parish duties to the sick, etc., or he must neglect the important work in the school.

However, the priest should and must be the superintendent of the parish school. Upon him falls the obligation of maintaining a high standard of instruction. His building may not boast of the architectural stateliness and beauty of the school built under public patronage. But the subject-matter taught,

and the manner of teaching in the parochial school, must attain the same excellence as in the schools of the state.

The question arises, should the pastor of a foreign-language school continue to make this language the medium of instruction? One of the greatest problems of the Church in the United States was that of dealing successfully with the thousands of immigrants, Poles, Lithuanians, Germans, and many others, who came to our shores, and made this country their own. The education of the children of these immigrants, in Catholic schools in their own language, was deemed absolutely necessary if they were to be saved for God and for the Faith. Hence the origin of the foreign-language school. However, the time is fast approaching when schools of this kind will of necessity have to adopt the language of this country as a medium of instruction.

And this leads to another important point. We have demonstrated that the parochial school must give the child all that the public

school gives. Now it is the boast of our so-called patriotic orders that the Little Red School-House is the nursery of patriotism. And, indeed, aside from the fact that religion and the teaching of religious morality are barred from the public schools, their aim is to make staunch and loyal citizens of the children of America. That, too, must be the great work of the parochial school. The teaching of the principles of morality as they are inculcated by the true Church of God is certainly the very best foundation of patriotism. But more is required. Our Catholic children must learn to love our freedom, to venerate our national heroes, and to be prepared to defend the flag that proclaims our liberty. And, in this connection, the words of Cardinal Gibbons, written twenty-three years ago, are very timely in our own day: "Our American youth . . . should be taught to cherish and perpetuate our national festivals. The meaning of each holiday should be brought home to them, so that they may be able to give a rational

account of the political faith that is in them.”¹ Here is work for the American priest. He must insist upon the inculcation of the civic virtue of patriotism. He should take pride in the fact that the children of his school are able to compete with others in the knowledge of the national events in our history,—that they are familiar with the song and poetry that thrills the American heart,—that, in fine, in consequence of their education in a parochial school they give promise of becoming the bravest defenders and most loyal supporters of our national freedom.

3. DEFENSE OF OUR SCHOOLS. The Catholic schools have always been the subject for bitter attack on the part of those agencies hostile to the Church. In fact, the boasted patriotism of the secret societies that infest our fair land has its beginning and end in the protection and defense of the Little Red School-House against the hated parochial school. This

¹ Card. Gibbons, “The Ambassador of Christ,” pp. 330-331.

hatred of Catholic education has never abated since it first took root in the hearts of our enemies. To-day it is more pronounced than ever. The devil's press is allied with socialism, anarchy, masonry and even some branches of Protestantism. Queer bed-fellows indeed! They have gone into an unholy partnership to destroy the Catholic schools in the land. And the daily press is nothing if not tolerant of their attitude.

Shall the freedom of religion granted us by the Constitution, the freedom for which our gallant sons fought and bled,—shall that freedom be denied the most fearless defenders of the Republic? The future of the parochial schools in the United States is by no means reassuring. Our enemies are allied and organized against us. There is only one thing for us to do,—there is only one remedy—and that is counter-organization. We must have a strong federation of Catholic societies—not merely a federation that contents itself with the annual convention, and annual resolutions.

It must be a federation that is active and alert every day of the year. But the Catholic societies in this country will never be one and act as one unless the American priests are united and act in unison. A League for the Defense of our Parochial Schools, made up of all the priests in the country, with an organ of its own, seems to be the first requisite for concentrated effort on the part of our laymen. The priest, being apprised weekly, by means of the official organ of movements for and against parish schools,—benefiting from the wisdom and experience of noted leaders contributing to the same, would be able to direct efficiently the efforts of local societies. And thus we might hope for united effort along the same lines. If there is a better means of marshaling our forces for the mighty battle for religious freedom, that seems to be at our very doors, then it should, by all means, be brought forward, and with the least possible delay. Born pacifists will say—why stir up a hornet's nest, let things be as they are. But our

enemies do not entertain such considerateness for us.

The American priest cannot loll in his easy-chair, convinced that the enemy has, in spite of many onslaughts, never succeeded in destroying our schools. "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." The enemy is stronger to-day than he ever was. He is not one, but multiple. He calls himself a socialist, then again a rationalist, again a freemason, and at times a Protestant—he has even presumed to call himself a patriot. His number is legion. But rest assured, he is not divided on this particular point. Therefore every American priest who fails to do his part in organizing our strength and our forces for resistance, is neglecting a most sacred duty to his Church as well as to his country. The Catholic schools are and must always be the mainstay and support of a thriving Catholic Church in America.

CHAPTER VII

WITH YOUNG MEN AND YOUNG WOMEN

1. **Y**OUNG MEN. The damnable hotel sideroom luring on the young man to debauchery and lust,—the malodorous sheets of slander and filth defiling his cherished visions of the sacredness of his faith,—the stage, so frequently the devil's own kindergarten,—the very atmosphere, that he breathes, surcharged with materialism and unbelief—what is going to save the Catholic young man from moral ruin? His young heart craves the comradeship of others and yearns for entertainment and recreation. Who is going to provide wholesome entertainment and suitable companions for him if not the priest? Here, indeed, is a fruitful field of work for the young priest as director of the young men's club.

But some one will say: there is the Y. M.

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C. A. with all its inducements, with lecture-courses, gymnasium, baths, dormitories, etc.,—we cannot compete with the Y. Indeed, the objection is not without foundation. Individual parishes would try in vain to compete with the Y. M. C. A., an organization backed by the wealth of the country. But, after all, is there any question of competing with the Young Men's Christian Association? Not so many Catholics are willing to affiliate themselves with an organization that discriminates against them and denies them the right to hold office. The great danger for Catholic young men is, I believe, not the Y. M. C. A., but the utter lack of control by any respectable society. The pool-rooms, the gambling-dens, the burlesque theaters: these are the real forces for evil that threaten our young men. To rescue them from these dangers is the task that falls upon the priest.

For the present, it will be necessary to foster Catholic clubs for young men in our parishes. But these clubs must not be merely looked

upon as an inexhaustible source from which to draw money for parish needs. Too frequently the young men's club exists for no better purpose than to conduct socials and entertainments for the various needs of the parish. Let the club be a living organization, offering the young men a place to go to spend their evenings, as well as offering them opportunity for culture and advancement. But the priest should be guide, counselor, and comrade. He plans entertainments, and supervises the placing of books in the library. If he be a man of sincerity of purpose and good will, he can easily win his boys to frequent Holy Communion, and thus guard them against the many dangers that threaten them.

In recent years the need of Catholic community centers has become recognized more and more. Differences of language and traditions in our city parishes have been a barrier to great success along these lines. But the day seems rapidly approaching when the commun-

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ity house for members of all parishes will be an urgent necessity. The alarming numbers of mixed marriages, with their baneful influence on Catholic life, seem to be sufficient reason for the establishing of these centers. For it cannot be denied that frequent intercourse and meetings of the Catholics of all city parishes would go a great way toward preventing many marriages of Catholics with non-Catholics.

2. YOUNG LADIES. What was said of the dangers to faith and morals confronting Catholic young men is also true, in a measure, in regard to Catholic young ladies. The Church has made wise provision for their needs in establishing sodalities throughout the world. The priest can perform no greater service to preserve our glorious Catholic womanhood than to lend every effort to make the young ladies' sodality attain its object in his parish. Fr. Garesché, S.J., has been an untiring apostle of advanced thought toward making the sodality attractive to Catholic young women. *The Queen's*

Work, of which he is the editor, will be of untold value to spiritual directors of sodalists.

The financial standing of many of our young ladies' sodalities would warrant the introduction of material advantages that would attract young women. Courses in sewing and elocution, by competent instructors, occasional lectures on topics of practical value, club-rooms for recreation, reading, and entertainment, all could come under the scope of the sodality's activity. All that is required on the part of the priest is supervision and encouragement. One might say that the sodality's work is essentially intended for spiritual advancement. Granted, but the fact remains that the American girl looks for comrades, for amusement, and for material advancement. Now if the sodality does not offer her these advantages there is great danger that she will seek them elsewhere, since the invitation is extended to her by non-Catholic organizations. If she is compelled to seek her amusement and entertainment amid non-Catholic and frequently anti-Catholic sur-

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roundings, it is a foregone conclusion that the sodality will suffer. The fact ever remains before us that in consequence of original sin, man is not inclined to virtue; he must be drawn toward it. Hence the necessity of enlarging the scope of the sodality's activities, to give material benefits in order not to suffer the loss of the spiritual advantages.

I am well aware that in many parishes the sodalities have adopted this policy—but, alas! the fact remains that a great many priests fail to understand that new times demand new methods. Sodalities are such merely in name. There is no effort made to add to their material as well as spiritual offerings, and the consequence is lack of interest on the part of the young ladies. The ulterior consequence is an alarming list of mixed marriages, and a still more alarming list of faithless wives and conscienceless mothers.

Another urgent need of the times is the home for Catholic working-girls. Many girls work

away from home, at occupations that do not provide a place of lodging. These girls may be far away from the salutary influence of home, and may be subject to great moral danger. The American priest must recognize this danger, and strive to meet it. Some of the larger cities have well-appointed homes for working-girls, but our smaller cities have not been able to shoulder the burden.

However, this should not discourage the priest. Surely there are to be found in every parish a number of good Catholic homes where a Catholic girl would be welcome. The sodality could keep a list of suitable homes where girls could board. Attention to this arrangement might be called either from the pulpit or by notices posted in the vestibule of the church.

Some priests may become impatient when new activities are proposed to them. But should they be less solicitous for the welfare of Catholic girls than their fellow-citizens, the Protestant leaders? Behold the activity of

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our separated brethren along these lines. I am not pronouncing on the purity of their motives, I am merely calling attention to the fact that they leave no stone unturned in their endeavors to win young America.

CHAPTER VIII

LEPROSY

PERHAPS the saddest experience in the priest's life, excepting apostasy and impenitence, is the finding of numbers of men and women afflicted with the leprosy brought on by the sins of the flesh. That the priest himself must be a man of chastity and unstained reputation for purity goes without saying. But what about the horrible conditions we find among some of the laity? God be praised and thanked, the so-called social diseases are not common among Catholics. But with the disease so prevalent, with the tolerance of houses of prostitution by many of our city officials, the time may soon come when we will hesitate to perform the marriage ceremony that may unite a pure girl with a moral leper. Recent statistics have demonstrated the extent to which

these horrible diseases are existing. Medical examinations of draftees in the selective draft have revealed astounding conditions. We have learned that an alarming proportion of the country's young men have had their lives blighted. We may look forward to great numbers of recruits for our insane asylums and homes for the feeble-minded.

What can the American priest do to stem the tide of moral and physical ruin? What means are at his disposal to avert unhappy marriages and the sufferings of broken-hearted wives and mothers? He can do two things—he must do both, if he would be loyal to the confidence reposed in him. His first task is to exert every effort to suppress the houses of prostitution,—secondly, it devolves upon him to equip his young men and young women with efficient preventives against the sins that bring these diseases in their wake.

Why are houses of prostitution tolerated in our cities? Simply because priests and ministers tolerate them. It would do no harm to

unite with Protestant ministers and Jewish rabbis on this point. No city administration would refuse to heed the insistent demand of the union of all religious forces in a community. The priest need not wait for the non-Catholics to launch the crusade. Let him arouse the others; they will surely heed his call. They must, if they would preserve their standing as men of God.

There can be no compromise with the evil. Segregation of vice is the solution offered in many cities. But the priest cannot tolerate any such arrangement. Prostitution is a grievous evil, a serious transgression of the law of God, and as such it must be stamped out. As long as priests and ministers are silent, as long as they content themselves with mere scolding and criticizing behind the walls of their rectories, the evil will continue to increase. The city officials must be approached; the gravity and importance of the matter must be laid before them in no uncertain terms. If then they refuse to act, publicity in the news-

papers has ever been found a most efficient tonic for torpidity.

But the abolition of the houses of sin will not be sufficient. As long as the evil remains, it will seek new outlets. The hearts of young men and young women must be educated to purity; their will-power must be fortified to resist the sin.

What are the remedies proposed by physicians and sociologists? They advise education. At this writing screen pictures are being shown in the Y. M. C. A. auditoriums with the hope of keeping men from vice and contamination by illustrating the resultant evils of the sins of impurity. On all sides we hear the cry: "Give our men more education." No, give them more religion. That is the only solution. Even a St. Paul found it difficult to combat temptations against purity, and he implored God to take away from him the "sting of the flesh." But God replied: "My grace is sufficient." It is the grace of God that men and women need more than anything else in com-

bating this sin as well as any other sin. "I knew that I could not otherwise be continent except God gave it"—these are the words we read in the Book of Wisdom. They are as true to-day as in the time of Solomon.

Give our young men and young women the opportunity of obtaining the grace of God if we would save them from the dangers of incontinence. There is the incomparable source of strength and grace, the Holy Eucharist. The priest cannot rest until he has taught his young folks to regard Holy Communion as the greatest boon in their lives. Untiring efforts, repeated injunctions to bring the young people to frequent Holy Communion will surely bring their rewards.

Here, again, we see the necessity of societies for growing girls and boys. For there is nothing that contributes so much to bringing the young people to the sacraments as the thought that other young men and girls are going with them.

Now we also understand the value of the

efforts of the priest in providing amusements and recreation for the young. Keep them interested in parish societies and the hell-holes of vice will perish.

Missions, triduums, retreats, and similar religious revivals are of untold value in deterring people from seeking the resorts of sin and disease. Indeed, the value of a good mission or retreat is so great in purifying the hearts of men that we should have them even more frequently than is now the custom. Those eternal truths of Heaven, Hell, Death, and Judgment grip the hearts of men. They should frequently be placed before their eyes, so that in the dark hours of temptation they will keep them strong and pure when no other power can.

The world is, indeed, in a sorry state of corruption. The law-makers and enforcers of the law are at sea. Their endeavors in reforming the world have been in vain, and will ever be futile, for they know not the proper remedies. Upon the priesthood devolves the tre-

mendous duty of saving the world. Upon the American priesthood descends the task of saving young America. A nation's greatness is as great as the purity of its people. Destroy purity in the individuals that make the nation, allow the spirit of self-denial to vanish from their hearts, and you tear down one of the main pillars of the country. An immoral, a foul and filthy nation will pass into oblivion even as the nations of old have passed, even as the nations of to-day are passing. Patriotism, if no other virtue, urges the priests of America to action, to instant and effective action. But there is a greater motive, "*caritas urget nos*," the love for our Master who suffered to save human souls, the love for those committed to our care. A great evil exists in our country, a tremendous responsibility rests upon our shoulders. Ours is the task to free the country of our birth or adoption from the dreadful leprosy of social diseases.

CHAPTER IX

IN THE HOMES OF HIS PEOPLE

1. **S**ICK CALLS. "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church."¹ One of the most important as well as most consoling duties of the priest is the care of the sick. It is precisely in attending the sick and dying that the priest brings home to his people the beauty, the blessedness of the Catholic religion. And it is here that he himself is brought face to face with the mysterious, yet wonderful workings of God's grace. The priest should therefore respond to sick-calls joyfully. But his duty does not end with the administration of the sacraments, Confession, Viaticum, and Extreme Unction. Father Noldin, in his pastoral conferences, held that a priest would be guilty of mortal sin if he made it a rule to neglect the

¹ James v. 14.

sick after administering the sacraments, or if he failed to visit a sick person whom he knew to be in grave danger of temptation and of relapse into sin. What, then, are we to think of the Catholic priest who responds to a sick-call, finds the sick person unconscious, administers the sacrament of Extreme Unction, but does not return to inquire whether or not the person regained consciousness? I have a case in mind which occurred several years ago. The patient had suffered a paralytic stroke and was anointed by the priest. He lived five days after receiving this sacrament, was conscious, but had lost his speech. The priest being asked to visit him again, replied: "I have done all I can for him." Needless to say this is not the spirit of Him, "*qui pertransiit benefaciendo.*"

Apostolic zeal should fire the heart of the priest in his treatment of the sick. For what you do to the least of them you do unto Him. Moreover, the priest learns to know his parishioners better, and gains their good will. It is

not at all necessary that his visits be lengthy. But his presence in the sick-room, for only a few minutes, gives joy and consolation to the sick, not to speak of the opportunity for Confession, should the patient desire it, and the value of the sacerdotal blessing.

Naturally, precautions must be taken, both against sickness and against sin. But fear should never enter the heart of the priest of God when attending contagious or infectious diseases. If he takes care not to catch the breath of the patient, refrains from all unnecessary touches of his person, sterilizes sick-call cloths, and washes his face and hands with some antiseptic solution, he may trust in God to be protected. And even if he becomes infected, which is rarely the case, even if he gives up his life, a victim to the disease, he cannot die more nobly than in the performance of the duties of his sacred profession.

But there is another, and more subtle danger, and that is the danger of sin. As precautionary measures against this danger, Father

Noldin, in his Conferences (which I believe have never been published) lays down the following rules, particularly for attending sick women:

1. Insist upon being called or accompanied to the sick by a man or boy.

2. Make all visits in broad daylight, unless the case is urgent.

3. Never enter the sick-room unless announced. If unannounced, knock at the door first, and tarry a while before entering.

4. Never touch the sick person unless it be necessary. Do not give medicine or prop the head.

5. Do not stay with the sick person alone for a long time.

6. Avoid all sentimentality.

A cheerful priest, one who dispels gloom instead of creating it, who gladly comes to bring Holy Communion, who manifests practical sympathy by volunteering to remember the sick at Mass,—is always welcome in the American Catholic home. His presence is as a

tonic, both for the sick and for the tired attendants.

Now, what about little children who are sick and too young to receive the sacraments? The Roman Ritual provides a special blessing, "*Benedictio Pueri Aegrotantis*," and without a doubt it is the earnest desire of the Church that this blessing should be used. Repeatedly, little children have been seen to recover from such diseases as marasmus, meningitis and infantile paralysis when the doctor had pronounced their cases hopeless. There can be no doubt about the efficacy of the prayer of the Church in behalf of little innocents who have never offended God. Not a few priests go the greatest distances to bless a sick child.

2. OTHER VISITS. In the opinion of some it is nothing short of criminal to enter the house of a parishioner except on business. The result is, that the priest who never makes a friendly call is looked upon much as is the bill-collector or the undertaker. His coming up the path that leads to the house forbodes dis-

tress and sorrow. But why should the priest, the best friend of American Catholics, be barred from their homes? What distorted form of reasoning withdraws the welcoming chair, that is graciously offered to lesser friends? The priest has a right to, and should by all means, occasionally visit his people. But he must be prudent and discreet in paying these visits. It is not at all Christlike to discriminate against the poor in favor of the wealthy and cultured.

I was alarmed some years ago when I was told by a priest that he greets his people according to their condition in life—with a profound bow for the better classes and a nod for the inferiors. We can imagine that such a disposition would also lead the priest studiously to avoid the homes of the poor and unlettered, and seek out the dwellings of the wealthy. Small wonder that we sometimes hear the cry that the priests are allied with the moneyed classes against the poor. It is inconceivable that any good American priest would actually

despise the poor. But he betrays a marked degree of indiscretion if he wounds their sensibilities by discriminating against them.

Furthermore, prudence demands that the priest make his friendly calls, if possible, when the head of the house is at home. The danger of losing the Catholic women for the Church is not half so great as the danger of losing the men. And to be candid, your American man despises the priest who avoids him. Let the average American Catholic man, whether he be poor or rich, educated or illiterate, realize that the priest is his friend,—that he takes interest in his problems, is ready to assist in need, rejoices with him in good-fortune, and sympathizes with him in sorrow,—and that man is won for God.

CHAPTER X

THE PROMINENT CITIZEN

THE American priest is a prominent citizen in his community. He is prominent by reason of his education and training, and certainly prominent by nature of his lofty calling. Why, then, should not the priest take interest and lend aid in civic and national affairs? He is, of course, not to identify himself in any way with politics. But there is always great activity in a city for the amelioration of living conditions, for civic betterment—and for various causes that promote the welfare of the people. It is, therefore, sad to record that priests, very often, do not manifest the least interest in the welfare of their city and the welfare of the nation. And they will defend their stand with such specious reasoning as this: “The priest is called by God to save immortal souls, and if he

attends to his duties he will have precious little time to be racing around in the rôle of prominent citizen." The argument would be sound but for its weakness. The priest is, indeed, called by God to save immortal souls. But a better understanding of the wants and needs of the people, free intercourse with those who misunderstand the position of the Church, and public defense of the Church and her teachings through public means,—comprise the avenue upon which the zealous American priest can lead many immortal souls to justification. Ultra-conservatism does not benefit the Church, and much less the nation.

Moreover, whilst forces are being united against us everywhere, whilst masonry is growing more bitter toward us every day,—the American priest's activities must, of necessity, extend beyond the confines of his parish,—his vision must reach beyond his office-door. An observer cannot be blind to the fact that there are two great movements under way, that di-

rectly or indirectly concern the future of Catholicism in America. The one great movement is the increased activity of and new alliances of the agencies professedly inimical to the Church. The other is the feverish spirit of organization of all forces, and unification of the various branches of Protestantism. Both of these great movements (great in the numbers engaged) tend to a common goal. Without a doubt, that goal is the paralyzation of Catholicity in America.

Father Noll, the editor of *Our Sunday Visitor*, in the January number of the *American Ecclesiastical Review*, 1919, called attention to the need of bringing the defense of Catholic doctrine, not only before the Catholic people, but before the Protestant world about us. And this leads to the question, Shall the Catholic priest, in the future, be content with performing the duties within his parish—sacred duties and important duties—or shall he enlarge his scope? Shall he strive to bring the blessings of his holy religion within the reach

of his neighbor, who may be a Protestant? Shall he employ methods and means heretofore scorned by the good old-fashioned parish priest, such as newspaper publicity and activity in civic affairs? The belief is growing among many Catholics that the time has arrived for such a change in our methods. The daily paper, "the voice of the people," is daily crying to us of the activity in civic affairs of the Rev. Mr. So and So. His sermons are announced every Saturday, and on Monday extracts thereof are published. The man acquires a large acquaintance in the city, his church is sought out, his sermons are heard, and many an indifferent Christian becomes attached to this or that denomination. I have not in mind that the personal popularity of the priest should be the vehicle for attracting others to the Church. But such civic activity on the part of the priest would afford him the opportunity of dispelling the prejudices in the minds of many. He could, as the occasion offered, give the Catholic viewpoint, and could in

many instances give the other side of many questions affecting Catholic doctrine or discipline. Again, our daily newspapers frequently carry news-items concerning the Church which are grossly unjust, damaging and very often absolute fabrications. The Catholic Truth Society is performing good work in this connection. But the society cannot be everywhere and has not the means to handle every case. But what about the Catholic priests in that district where such falsehoods and libels are published? Does not their silence, akin to the silence of death, seem to be an admission to the truth of these news-items? "*Qui tacet consentire videtur.*"

I need not be told that the average American priest is overburdened with work. It is not true. His neighbor, the pastor of this or that Protestant church, has a family to look after, and finds time for a remarkable amount of work. Is it possible that he has more zeal? I think not. But we feel so secure about the perpetuity of the Church, that we fancy the

truth will prevail under all conditions. Yes, the truth will prevail and the Church will remain "unto the consummation of the world." But what a sad page will be written in the history of the Church in America if, for instance, the prohibition movement would be able to bring about the "abomination of desolation," the abolition of the holy Sacrifice of the Mass? What a bitter reproach upon the Catholic clergy and laity, if a state monopoly of schools is brought about, suppressing our parochial schools, or subordinating them to secular control?

And what about the menace of bolshevism? Are the activities throughout the world of the numerous branches of socialism the distant rumblings of a social eruption? In other countries the priests have been obliged to defend the Church publicly against these dangers,—but, alas! in some places it was too late when the priests were finally aroused from their lethargy. Bolshevism had sown the seed of dis-

content, sabotage, and rebellion, and was reaping the harvest.

The time is ripe now for enlarged activity on the part of our priests and educated laymen. Tell the Catholic people of the dangers that threaten them, tell them that the Catholic Church is the best friend of the poor and of the workingmen, prove it to them. Yes, tell them, but by all means tell the world about the blessings of our holy religion. Thank God, some have recognized the dangers threatening civilization in general, and the Church in particular, and have thrown themselves with a whole-hearted zeal into the work of averting these dangers. But it will not be sufficient that here or there a weak voice of counsel or of protest be heard. It must be the voice of all, the voice that will be heard from coast to coast, the voice that will penetrate into the senate chambers and into the legislative assembly rooms, the voice that will demand recognition, fairness, and justice for all.

Too long have we slept whilst the enemy was sowing his seed. The hour for action has struck. The American priest, if he would be true to his calling as good shepherd, must use every legitimate means at his disposal to save society, to save America. The world, and especially America, is casting anxious glances about for a possible solution of her civic and national problems. She thought that more education would solve them. But the state has discarded religion from her education, and therefore cannot solve the problems. Protestantism, with her one dogma of private judgment, has undermined religion. She cannot solve them. The Catholic Church, with her infallible teaching authority, with her sublime moral code, with her irresistible sanction, with her sacraments and other means of grace, she alone can heal the cancerous wounds that must needs sap the life-blood of our republic. But then there can no longer be any doubt, but that the American priest has a solemn obligation to use every means, personal influence, activity

in public life, and even newspaper publicity, to bring the blessings of the Catholic religion before those Americans who are outside the pale of the Church.

CHAPTER XI

HUMILITY

CAN the priest who is active in civic affairs, whose name is on the lips of all, whose work is lauded by the public press,—can such a priest be called humble? Indeed, he can, if in his various activities he is guided by the proper motives. Humility is not inertia. Even the tiny violet by the wayside loudly proclaims the Creator's glory. Humility is that virtue whereby we take no glory for our deeds but ascribe them solely to God. "For great is the power of God alone, and He is honored by the humble."¹

Behold a St. Paul, traveling from city to city, his name a household word in pagan, Jewish and Christian families. Can we doubt but that if there had been newspapers in those

¹ Ecclesiasticus iii. 21.

times, St. Paul would have commanded great headlines on the front page?

Again, view the life of Our Saviour. Doing good as He went along, He attracted the multitudes. Thousands of men and women flocked to hear Him, forgetting, for the time, their homes and firesides, so that He had to provide food for them.

The motive is the thing. If the priest seeks his own glory, if he vaunts his talents and abilities to win the praises of his fellowmen, then, indeed, there is no question of humility. But if in order to make men better acquainted with the Catholic Church and her teachings, he adopts means and measures to bring the true religion of God before the people, his motive need not be the seeking of his own glory, but may reasonably be the greater glory of God. Too frequently have priests hidden themselves in the seclusion of the rectory, and have feared to shed their light, lest they be deemed proud and ambitious. Thus brilliant talents have gone to waste, shining lights, that might have

illuminated their immediate surroundings, have been hidden under a bushel.

Catholic laymen have repeatedly been humiliated by the apathy of their parish priests when the latter had been called upon to lend aid in some civic enterprise. The priest was called upon to deliver an address, for instance, and either absolutely refused or made some unkind and perhaps uncharitable remarks to the inviting committee; or if he did accept the invitation, neglected to prepare himself for the occasion, and made of himself an object of ridicule and contempt. And what has he accomplished for the good of the Church by his false humility? Absolutely nothing. On the contrary, he has estranged from the Church possible friends, he has given non-Catholics material proof for their oft-repeated charges against the Church and its ministers.

Can that be humility? Or is it rather churlishness and unwise conservatism?

It cannot be denied that it is a severe test of the priest's humility if he receives recognition

and praise for his activities. He is apt to be tempted to ascribe to himself the fruits of the talents that God gave him. But *per se* the fruitful use of one's talents, even though it calls forth the plaudits of the people, cannot be considered as offending against humility.

Another test of humility, albeit of an entirely different nature, is the small and poor parish. In some denominations the country parishes are given to the "*minus habentes*," for the simple reason that men of ability would refuse to labor for small returns. However, with the Catholic priest it is quite a different matter. If he labors for gold then, indeed, he has missed his vocation. There is no stigma attached to one's reputation because of long years in a country parish. The priest assigned to a small charge should give that parish all that is in him. Whether he remains long in the parish or but for a few years, the faithful confided to his care must never be led to believe that he has his "hook baited for a larger catch." The rural people and those of small city par-

ishes need all the help the priest can give them. They are in need of good sermons and instructions; they should have the blessings of frequent Communion; they should have a thriving sodality; and, if at all possible, their children should be trained in a modern parochial school. The dangers that threaten Catholic life are apparent in small communities as well as in the large cities. The farmer is no longer isolated. With modern means of rapid transportation, the theaters and amusement places, as well as the dens of vice are within his reach. His occupation, the success of which is so much dependent upon the blessing of God, naturally makes of him a religious man. But he needs the assistance of his priest to preserve him in virtue and the fear of God.

Let the priest assigned to a small parish work as though he were to remain there for life; let him use all the gifts that God gave him for the benefit of his people. When the time comes for him to assume greater labors and responsibilities, his zeal, his ambition for God's

glory will not have stagnated. The priest who disdains to accept a small parish is not fitted for any parish, for the one great, essential virtue is missing in his make-up, namely, humility.

CHAPTER XII

IN SOCIAL WORK

GREAT and glorious America will not survive unless her national prosperity and perpetuity be built upon the firm foundation of justice and charity in social and commercial intercourse. Survey the gigantic proportions assumed by American commercial enterprise, and you will realize that this is in reality a mainstay of our country. Our exports and imports, in times of peace, amount annually to about three billion dollars, while the Clearing House Exchange, in tranquil times, exceeds each year the enormous amount of one hundred and fifteen billion dollars. And are not trusts and monopolies of untold millions a well-known feature of our modern enterprise? In short, the commercial life of America is the

marvel of the world. But if honesty is the backbone of prosperity, then our stability is short-lived. Wholesale graft in dealing with national funds is the order of the day. And when the poor and starving in the tenement houses hear of this wanton juggling of millions it makes their very blood boil. Observe the ever-widening chasm between capital and labor. Frequent strikes time and again plunge whole provinces and even the whole nation into suffering and misery. Do these and other similar experiences cast the shadow of great and terrible events that are to follow? Indeed, if the chasm between capital and labor cannot be bridged, the prosperity of America is but a passing phenomenon. Where is the remedy? Arbitration of difficulties, material concessions are but temporary. As long as the root of the evil remains it will continue to send forth new shoots. There is only one power that can settle this vexed question and that power is the Catholic Church. Pope Leo XIII, in his famous encyclical on the Labor

Question, has laid down the only sensible, the only feasible plan of solving the social problems, and that is through the true religion of God.

By her teaching of the brotherhood of man the Church has filled the chasm between slave and master; by her doctrine of charity she has filled the chasm between the poor peasant and his feudal lord; and by her teaching she can fill the chasm between capital and labor. The injunction of strict justice upon capital will guard labor against unfair wages and unhealthy working conditions, while her mandate of charity will be as a soothing balm poured on the wound of poverty. Her doctrine of a Divine Providence that has ordained riches and poverty alike, and distributed both according to a wise dispensation,—her teaching, in fine, of a future world, for which the present is but a preparation: this alone can calm the social discontent.

The duty of the American priest will be to guard his workingmen against the snares of a

false society that proposes to heal their wounds and right their wrongs. He must give them the only true remedy, that proposed by the Catholic Church. But on the other hand, he must demand justice on the part of the employer to his employees, he must insist upon living wages, so that the workingman can support his family frugally. Furthermore, it is incumbent upon the Catholic priest to secure the proper distribution of Catholic charities. But the only proper distribution is through the channels that the Church maintains.

We are indebted to Pope Leo XIII for the following sentiments: "Those Catholics are worthy of all praise—and there are not a few—who, understanding what the times require, have, by various enterprises and experiments, endeavored to better the condition of the working people without any sacrifice of principle."¹ If Catholics, in general, are worthy of all praise for their endeavors in behalf of the working people, how much the more praise-

¹ Leo XIII, Enc., "Condition of Labor."

worthy would such endeavors be coming from the Catholic leaders, the priests?

Since then, the priest has a duty here, since there opens up before him a wonderful opportunity for exercising great powers for good in aiding to solve the social problems,—it is evident that he must be well versed in the needs of the people—and well acquainted with the best remedies. He must know the conditions under which men labor, and he must know the capitalist's side of the case. In a word, he must be an earnest student of Christian sociology. The very best foundation for such study is, without a doubt, the social program laid down by Pope Leo XIII in his two famous encyclicals, "On the Condition of Labor" and "On Christian Democracy."

In the pulpit and in the society meeting-rooms the priest must bring home to his people the principles of Christian sociology. In public and through the press, and by every lawful and prudent means, he must demand justice and fairness from those who possess wealth and

power. Socialism is trying with might and main to insinuate her doctrines into public education. The Catholic priest must use the same means, namely education, to promulgate the teachings of Christian sociology. Hence, again the necessity of parochial schools as well as parochial high-schools.

Some years ago I was staying in a foreign city, noted for its preponderant Catholic population, but also noted for the social unrest among its people. Priests there were aplenty. But it was a notorious fact that, with the exception of but a few of the more zealous, the clergy paid no attention whatsoever to the needs of the times. The result of their inactivity was apparent then. To-day that same city is aflame with the maddening fires of bolshevism. When the flames die down, and peace and order will again reign in that city—what will be left of its Catholicity? Will the churches lie in ruins, and will infidel temples arise from their ashes? Time only will tell.

Do we not see the social unrest in our own

cities to-day? Are we not aware that bolshevism and anarchy have sown the seed of discontent broadcast throughout the land? You say the American people are too sensible to adopt the methods of bolshevism. Is not socialism the next of kin to bolshevism? And have we not seen the hand of socialism, in the Supreme Court of the land, have we not seen it in the Senate and in the House, have we not heard this doctrine inculcated in the lecture-halls of our universities, and have we not heard it from the pulpits of American churches? How many of our American priests are preparing for the struggle or trying to avert it? Many indeed, but great numbers of them, it is to be feared, either do not see the danger or do not apprehend its significance.

No other agency can save America, can preserve her glorious liberty, her illustrious institutions but the Catholic Church. She is impotent, if her clergy refuses to apply her teachings. Save America, save her by all means, American Catholic priests. It is within your

power to render the onslaughts of socialism powerless,—it is within your power to prepare the Catholic people, and perhaps many others to withstand successfully the open and secret attacks of this beast of hell upon order and peace.

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CHAPTER XIII

KINDNESS

IF there is one virtue which should adorn the heart of a priest, it is kindness. He may be the possessor of but mediocre ability as an orator, he may be a failure as a diplomat, his appearance may leave much for improvement,—but if his heart is filled with kindness, little children will love him, his own people will gladly reverence and obey him, his fellow-citizens, of all creeds, will honor and respect him.

Kindness to non-Catholics? Why not? St. Francis de Sales often tried out the experiment and he pronounced a lump of sugar a far greater attractive power than a whole cask of vinegar. We need not assume that all outside the pale of the Church are bitter enemies. And even if they were, kindness on the part of the priest would disillusion many. It has fre-

quently come to the writer's notice that non-Catholic men, who were reputed to be bigots and inimical to everything Catholic, numbered Catholic priests among their honored friends, and lost no opportunity to say a good word in favor of their clerical acquaintances. And the reason? Because those priests had been kind to them and had treated them like human beings.

If we but consider that many non-Catholics have been reared amid surroundings that were anything but friendly to our Church,—that school text-books have colored their views in matters Catholic,—that some ministers, in their instructions and sermons, deliberately poison the minds of their hearers—can we expect anything but an attitude of suspicion on the part of non-Catholics toward us? We are not laboring in a Catholic country, nor even in a Christian country. We are surrounded on all sides by unbelief. The fields are, indeed, ripe for the harvest. The American priest has but to reach out to draw immortal souls to God.

He can, however, not expect to gain the confidence and trust of non-Catholics unless kindness and benevolence determine his conduct towards them. There was only one class of people to whom Our Saviour displayed harshness: it was to the Pharisees. For He knew the hypocrisy of their hearts. But to the Samaritan woman He was kind and benevolent.

Kindness on the part of the priest in his dealings with his own people is even more essential, especially in the confessional. Who of us has not had sad experience with the crabbed and irascible confessor? I have known good people who looked forward to confession somewhat as the small boy anticipates a whipping. It was an ordeal for them, because they knew what they had to expect from their impatient and ill-mannered confessor. The consequence was that these people were loath to go to confession, and put off the hard task for weeks and months. Again we might ask, what does the priest of this type accomplish for the good of immortal souls? If men and women are

driven away from the sacraments by his unkindness, can he escape the blame for it before the judgment-seat of God?

Having heard confessions for a number of years, I need not be told that the long "grind" very often taxes one's strength and tries one's patience. But the lay people do not understand that. They are invited to frequent Communion, and they take it for granted that the priest will be pleased to see them approach the confessional. What, then, must be their amazement to find the priest in an angry and sullen mood?

There are, to be sure, times when the confessor must be stern, and must insist upon the necessary conditions and disposition for a good confession. But even then he need not be abusive, he need not insult and wound his penitent. What motive can the priest have in driving penitents out of the confessional with a shower of abusive language? Self-control is one of the first requisites for kindness.

There are also times when the lack of dispo-

sition on the part of the penitent compels the priest to refuse absolution. But, surely, there is not sufficient excuse for wholesale refusal of absolution. It must be admitted that the man or woman coming to confession has some spark of good will. Why not work on that good will, in all kindness, and try to dispose the penitent for a worthy reception of the sacrament?

But then, kindness in the confessional must not be construed to mean sentimentality. There is absolutely no place in the sacred tribunal for such perverse kindness. Furthermore, it is conducive to no good. The priest must be aware of the fact that the knowledge of whatever he says or does, in the confessional, which is unnecessary or even imprudent, will be conveyed to others, and will furnish material for amusement to some and for disgust to others.

Kindness shown to penitents who are very young and timid, as well as to the old and forgetful, will rarely develop into sentimentality.

Indeed a kind word from the priest, instead of a scolding, will help the memory of the child as well as the old grandmother or grandfather.

True kindness, which originates from love of God, and from zeal for the salvation of souls, will reap its own reward. Such kindness will not only attract those who have not been reared in the faith, but will also increase the influence of the priest over those who are intrusted to his care. He will wield a magic power over his people, he will command their respect, their obedience, their love. As though gifted with some superior ability, he will lead them on to God. The secret of his power is kindness.

CHAPTER XIV

THE FINANCIER

1. **P**ARISH FINANCES. Until the Creator changes the order of things upon earth, and either restores paradise, or makes our bodies ethereal, money or some similar form of exchange will be absolutely necessary. Some faint-hearted American priests have, perhaps, often wished that the task of raising money for church-maintenance and parish expenses would devolve upon other shoulders, or through the mercy of God be entirely abolished. And it may be that some of us have looked, with envy in our hearts, across the waters to lands where the government bore the greatest burden of parish financing. However, the American priest can thank God that the government cannot dictate to him and superintend his work.

The people of this country fully realize conditions and, as a rule, take care of the parish needs. But the pastor must also know his people and know their resources. His demands upon them must never exceed their ability to pay. It all looks very fine and, no doubt, adds to the prestige of the priest who has built a one hundred and fifty thousand dollar church or a seventy-five thousand dollar rectory. But it is an execrable outrage if he has done so by bleeding a twenty-thousand dollar congregation. He might object that a building-committee was appointed and that it was by their approval that the building was erected. Indeed it was, but the good pastor dominated all sessions of the building-committee. And, after all, what does the average building-committee know about the difficulty of raising a vast sum of money among poor people?

If the people realize that there is need of a certain amount of money, and if they can readily see that the pastor is sincere in his endeavor

not to overburden them, then success is assured.

The various means of raising money for parish purposes have their "pros and cons." The average priest will adopt those which most appeal to him. However, scolding and ranting in church must be put down as the least desirable method. I have heard people who were unusually generous to their church, threatened with eternal damnation if they did not raise a certain sum, within a given time, by voluntary contributions. Indeed, to see the violence of anger depicted upon the countenance of the money-scolder would lead one to doubt in his faith in the Real Presence. Violent anger before the tabernacle has ever been a source of pain and distress to the faithful. And as for results, the calm and accurate presentation of facts before the people will always be most productive.

2. PRIVATE MONEYS. "He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent."¹ The

¹ Proverbs xxviii. 20-22.

priest is, by all the laws of equity, entitled to a fair compensation for his labors. And there is not the least fear that our American priests will ever become wealthy from their allotted salaries. However, the system of stole-fees opens a wide field for abuse. And avarice, that subtle vice, knows how to justify her iniquities. Who has not heard of fifty and seventy-five dollar weddings? And mind well, these are not voluntary offerings of the people, but fees stipulated by the pastor. If the Saviour would appear to-day in some churches as he appeared of old in the Temple to drive out the venders and money-changers, He would have to go farther than the vestibule, He would have to approach the very altar.

The American priest who is not excessive in his demands for stole-fees, who provides for himself a library of good books, who has an open heart for the poor and needy, who gathers riches for himself in heaven by supporting the Catholic missions, will have little more than life-insurance to bequeath to charities.

Money is needed to live according to his position and dignity. But the priest must never allow money and riches to be the goal of his ambitions. Even though he may have to forego legitimate pleasures, even though his wealth may be counted in less than four figures, he is rich, infinitely rich in the vastness of his powers. Where is the angel to whom God has given such powers? Where is the angel or arch-angel who can compel the God of majesty and omnipotence, the Creator and Lord of all, to come upon the altar and offer Himself in sacrifice? If the priest but knows himself and realizes the sublimity of his calling, the greatness of his powers, wealth and poverty are to him but words. He rises above the sordid things of the world, to the glory, the grandeur, the infiniteness on high, to Him whose vicar he is.

“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking care of it, not by constraint but willingly, according to God: not for filthy lucre’s

sake but voluntarily. And when the Prince of pastors shall appear, you shall receive a never-fading crown of glory.”¹

¹ Peter v. 2, 4.

CHAPTER XV

PATRON OF THE CATHOLIC PRESS

BIGOTRY has recognized the power of the press to propagate its foul slanders and calumnies; socialism has by crafty manipulation obtained the indorsement of Trades Unions for its ruinous sheets; masonry sways the scepter over the daily newspaper, and the American priest must recognize the tremendous force for good, for instruction, for defense and for combat in the Catholic press.

Various causes have been advanced as the elements most vital in winning the great world war. There are those who maintain that the British navy won the war; others insist upon the honor belonging to the brave French poilu; and at home it is confidently asserted that American wheat and American foodstuffs brought peace to the world. But who can deny that a most prominent rôle was played by

the press? The efficient procedure of the selective draft, the raising of vast sums of money—these and other war activities would have been sorely crippled but for the hearty support of the American press. And the same holds in the allied countries. There can be no hesitation in pronouncing the press a tremendous power.

If then, the American priest is aware that every week millions of copies of such venomous sheets as the *Menace*, the *Yellow-jacket*, and others of their ilk are sent broadcast throughout the land; if he has discovered that the rabid and radical, godless and immoral outpourings of the socialist print-shop are to be found in the homes of his working-men,—must not he, if the spirit of Christ reigns in his breast, look anxiously about for a remedy, for an antidote for the poisons that are systematically being disseminated among those confided to his care? Where is the remedy, the antidote? Undoubtedly it must be the Catholic press.

But he may say, the Catholic press is anæmic; it does not measure up to the standard required in an efficient weapon to combat the forces that are being hurled against us. Granted that some Catholic publications are not quite what they ought to be. What is the reason for this? It is the lack of support on the part of the Catholic clergy and laity. We are awaking to the fact that we have a duty here, but the awaking in some quarters is mighty sluggish. What about the great number of Catholic priests in charge of small parishes? Time weighs heavily upon their hands. They must needs cast about for hobbies of one kind or another to pass the time. Why not employ the education and the talents that are theirs for the elevation of the Catholic press? No need to look for financial returns. The spiritual good done will amply repay the zealous writer.

We cannot deny that to-day the Catholic press boasts of a number of virile and high-standard weeklies and periodicals. But if

they are to maintain their high standard, and if others are to emulate their example, the priests must rally to their support, must use every available means to bring these papers into Catholic homes.

The most feared opponent of the *Menace* and other filth-dispensers of its type, is the excellent Catholic weekly *Our Sunday Visitor*, of Huntington, Indiana. It can be obtained in bundle lots most reasonably, and can be given out or sold in the church vestibule every Sunday. Some pastors consider this paper so good and so necessary that they have a copy for every family in the parish, and pay for the lot from the parish funds, just as they would for any other parish necessity. The American priest who does not know *Our Sunday Visitor* has certainly missed something excellent. He would do well to procure a copy, read it, and marvel how he ever got along without it.

The newspaper mentioned has a mission in America, an admirable mission, viz., to bring

American non-Catholics face to face with the sublime, the reasonable, the divine, the compelling doctrines of the Catholic Church. And in carrying out this mission, this paper naturally instructs the Catholic reader, and equips him with most powerful weapons of defense.

But lest it might seem that I discriminate against other Catholic weeklies, some of which are very ably edited, be it known, that it is an established fact that parishes, where *O.S.V.* has been introduced develop a healthy appetite for Catholic literature. The result is most favorable to publishers who produce books, papers, and magazines that are worth while.

Time and again attempts have been made to establish a live Catholic daily newspaper, and it seems that such efforts have either met with discouragement, or have encountered, what appeared to be, insurmountable obstacles. And yet, there is apparently no sufficient reason why a Catholic daily could not be set in motion, and be successful, not merely in one

city, but in every city that can show a Catholic population of forty thousand. We understood that renewed efforts are being made at the present time to establish several Catholic dailies. Let us hope that these efforts will be successful and that when once established the papers will receive unstinted support.

It might be urged that the launching of such an enterprise as the establishing of a number of Catholic dailies in America would be throwing down the gauntlet to our secular press, and that we might look for a violent outburst of torrential abuse upon everything Catholic. However, we have grown quite used to abuse, and whether we are attacked openly and above board, or by ill-concealed sneers and subtle insinuation, makes but little difference. Men are being paid to keep honest opinions out of the secular press; everything favorable to the Church is carefully eschewed, whilst sensational dispatches concerning our faith are given prominent headlines, regardless of their truthfulness or falsity. Whilst every man,

woman, and child was proclaimed a hero or heroine for the least amount of sacrifice in the late war, the great work of the Knights of Columbus was scarcely recognized. Nor did we ever read a word of the bravery of the nursing Orders of France, although they served unselfishly and with the utmost efficiency. Must the Catholic Church forever be wronged in this country by the daily press? Are we going to sit by idly and never raise a finger in protest? The time is ripe for the Catholic daily newspaper. It has been considered indispensable in other countries; necessity and duty demand its inauguration here.

CHAPTER XVI

FRIEND OF THE MISSIONS

BEHOLD I say to you, lift up your eyes and see the countries. For they are white already to harvest.”¹ France, the most generous friend of the Catholic missions, has for the past several years been unable to send her customary offerings to the distant pagan lands. That country is at present in need, in dire need of financial assistance to restore her ruined cities and villages; Germany, in the throes of a civil war, and financially bankrupt; Italy all but emaciated,—the Catholic missions look to prosperous America for assistance. And unless that assistance be forthcoming, and that with all possible speed, Catholic missionaries must be prepared to see the fruits of their labors plucked by false teachers.

¹ John iv. 35.

The pagan world numbers more than one billion souls, or about two-thirds of the world's population. This is, indeed, a rich field for harvest. But missionary work cannot be carried on without money. The call of Christ to "teach all nations" goes out to every Catholic. Fifteen thousand priests, five thousand brothers and forty-five thousand sisters have responded to this call. Many of these noble men and women were reared in homes of culture, and not a few in homes of affluence. But when God called to them "Follow Me," they responded joyfully. The ties of earthly friendship and love were severed, and wealth, pleasures, and ambitions were cast aside, so that they could take up the cross of Christ. In a foreign land, thousands of miles away from home, they are happy to be the friend and associate of men and women of the lowest classes of humanity. Angels of mercy, these devoted missionaries labor among people of a very low mentality, suffer untold privations—and what do they accomplish?

If we consider the work of the Holy Childhood Association alone, we are given an idea of the great amount of good that is being performed. The Holy Childhood maintains 1,500 orphanages, 12,000 schools and 5,000 workshops. About 600,000 little children are saved and educated annually. And to date this Association has sent twenty million little infants directly to heaven, by rescuing and baptizing them. This is but a part of the gigantic work of the missions.

A priest in Hyderabad, India, is responsible for the statement, "Give me twenty-four dollars to support one catechist for twelve months, and at the end of that time I will give you five hundred converts."¹ One would imagine that the bishops and priests of the world would hasten to supply the means of providing for great numbers of catechists. For the catechetical instruction, on the part of trained native catechists, is absolutely necessary for

¹ J. F. McGlinchey, D.D., "Catechism on Catholic Foreign Missions," p. 25.

mission success. However, despite the great possibilities, the facts tell us that, not only has there been no gratifying addition to the number of catechists, but many have actually been discharged for want of funds.

America has done comparatively little for Catholic missions. We have sent few missionaries to foreign lands. But that would be excusable, as our home missions need priests and workers. But that, in the matter of contributions, the Catholics of this country lag far behind their non-Catholic brethren is not excusable. I expect to hear some one say that the Catholic congregations of America have more than enough to do to maintain their own churches and schools. But the American priest may rest assured that God will not let himself be outdone in generosity. Whatever goes out of our parishes for so noble a cause will, most assuredly, be returned to us a hundred-fold.

The Catholic people of America are most generous in their charities if their attention is

drawn to a good cause. Note the response of American Catholics in the various war campaigns during the World War. Priests throughout this country were frankly astonished at the liberality of their people. But what was the reason for this fine response? It may have been patriotism,—if so, it was patriotism aroused by publicity. Posters were scattered everywhere, newspapers advertised freely, public speakers addressed the masses in every city, village, and hamlet in the country. The whole nation was enthusiastic and unheard-of sums were collected.

Could not this same publicity produce a like effect in behalf of the missions? The cause is far nobler than any presented to us during the war. It is not merely a question of saving human lives, but of saving immortal souls, souls so precious that God Himself became man to purchase them with His Blood. Oh, if the priests of America would but recognize their opportunity to perform a glorious work of apostolic zeal; if they would but seize the

means at their disposal and canvass America for this great cause,—who could estimate the benefit to Catholic missions and, also, who could estimate the blessings of God that would descend upon the Catholic Church in America?

You say charity begins at home. Let me quote to you the beautiful answer to this in Father Husslein's great book, "The Catholic's Work in the World": "True charity begins at home and in its zeal extends to the utmost limits of the earth. Nor can it be bounded even by the round of this petty planet, this mote of dust whirling through the vastness of space. It will descend in the greatness of its love to free the souls imprisoned in purgatorial flames, and thence mount upward and rejoice with the angels and saints in glory. Ranging through all creatures it will return only to concentrate its energy the more intensely upon that one little spot which it lovingly calls its country, its city, its parish, its home."

CHAPTER XVII

GUIDE OF THE CONVERT

MEN and women, even boys and girls, for some reason or another, find their way to the parish rectory and apply to the pastor for instruction in the Catholic faith. The priest, always ready to instruct converts, must naturally give such applicants a friendly welcome. But on the other hand, great care must be exercised until the priest is convinced of the good intentions of his prospective convert. Who has not heard of the professional convert, who goes about from parish to parish, playing on the good will of generous priests, with no thought but that of amercing them for their kindness?

Aware of the host of impostors, the priest will, at the very outset, inquire carefully into the motives of his candidate, ascertain his occupation and place of employment as well as his

place of residence. In possession of these facts, the priest will at once be able to determine whether or not he will begin instructions.

Nor must he be too severe in weighing the motives. A great number wish to embrace the Catholic religion because they intend to marry a Catholic. This motive is, indeed, insufficient in itself. However, in such cases instruction of the non-Catholic party is of the utmost importance. In fact, in some dioceses it is mandatory upon the priest to instruct non-Catholics desiring to enter into the marriage contract with Catholics.

If, after thorough instruction, the applicant is not convinced of the truth of the Catholic religion he should not, under any conditions, be admitted to the Church. He must express the desire for the Catholic faith. Receiving prospective brides or bridegrooms into the Church with the intention of instructing them after marriage is the acme of folly and imprudence. A case that has come under the writer's ob-

servation will illustrate this contention. A man of no particular religious convictions applied to a priest to be received into the Church. His motive was marriage. The priest, believing that he had before him a character that could easily be molded, gave a few brief instructions on Baptism and Matrimony, received the young man into the Church and performed the marriage ceremony in the house of God. Once or twice the man has entered a Catholic church since his "conversion." He professes not to have known of the ridiculous and superstitious practices of the Catholic Church. He became a member of one of our bitterest secret orders, and forbids his wife to go to church or to have the children baptized. Five children have been born to this couple, and five souls will be barred from the blessings and graces of the true Church of God, not to speak of the judgment of father and mother in the next world. But what about the priest who, in a measure, is responsible for this sad state of affairs?

Unless the convert be well-versed in the Sacred Scriptures and religious doctrines, the priest should not be content with merely electing the points of difference between denominations. He should take the whole catechism for instruction. Needless to say, it will be imprudent to condemn heretics. For, although the convert wishes to become Catholic, he may be very sensitive concerning the belief of his fathers. In a simple, convincing manner, the truths of religion should be placed before him. Furthermore, the convert is anxious to be admitted into the Church, therefore long-drawn-out dissertations on this or that theological question are of no practical value. The period of instruction should not exceed six months, and should not, if possible, take up more than three months. And since faith is a gift of God, which has been denied to so many, otherwise noble, souls, the convert must be told in the very beginning to pray for this great gift. A devout "Hail Mary" daily would surely accomplish the desired result.

Then, too, the priest must not neglect to lay special stress upon the doctrines and practices essentially Catholic, e. g., the devotion to the Blessed Virgin. There is no need of beautiful stories, but her prerogatives should be given. The convert must be convinced of Mary's position in the plans of God for redemption. "*Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.*"

The devotion to the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, visits to the Prisoner of the tabernacle, frequent holy Communion: these instructions must be thorough. Nor must the convert be admitted to the Church unless schooled in reverence and respect for the Holy Father and the Hierarchy.

Catholic devotions, morning and evening prayers, the angelus, the rosary: these and similar Catholic devotions and sacramentals help to keep the convert strong in his faith and devoted to its teachings.

After receiving the convert into the Church it will be the priest's obligation to introduce

him to good Catholic society, and, if necessary, to secure honest work for him.

In dealing with converts the American priest can sow the seed of faith that will continue to be productive of rich and glorious fruits long after he himself has gone to his reward. But his negligence and lack of zeal in instructing converts may also be productive of lasting harm and disaster to immortal souls.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE FATHER OF THE POOR

THE Catholic Church has ever been the haven to which God's poor have fled for succor and protection. We call them God's poor, for has He not blessed them as His own? "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."¹ And is it not through the wise dispensation of the Father of us all that riches and poverty have been ordained alike? It is His will that the rich share their wealth with the poor, so that Christian charity may not only be the healing balm on the sores of poverty, but may also be the saving virtue that rescues the rich from the devouring maw of hell.

Since, then, we have the poor always with us, and since it is the will of God that those in

¹ Matthew v. 3.

better circumstances come to their aid,—the duty of the priest to direct the offerings of charity, through the proper channels, to those in want, needs no further demonstration.

America is proclaimed “the land of milk and honey,” where wealth and prosperity abound. True it is that our country is rich in its resources, and offers unbounded opportunities to the ambitious and the industrious. But the Catholic priest, who by the duties of his holy office is called to the rich and to the poor alike, has seen homes of squalid poverty in rich America. He has found widows in tears, their famished offspring clinging to their garments, clamoring for bread. He has entered homes when winter’s cold blast was lashing furiously, only to find mothers with their children huddled about a stove that had no fuel to burn or give warmth. He has been a protesting witness when, sickness and accident having rendered the bread-winner helpless, the landlord appeared with warnings of ejection.

Yes, even rich America has its poor, and in

great numbers. A recent cartoon in the daily papers by Satterfield depicted a man and woman gaunt and haggard from privation. The woman was named Hunger, her body was nothing more than a skeleton poorly clad. The man, an old man, fettered at the wrists, with a ball chained to his foot, was called Injustice. Above the cartoon was the legend, "The Parents of Bolshevism." Indeed, socialism, anarchy or bolshevism, have a most fruitful field in the poor, to sow their pernicious seeds of infidelity. And unless the poor find a better friend, they will rally in great numbers to the red standard.

Can the American priest perform a work more pleasing to God than caring for and fathering the poor? "Son, defraud not the poor of alms, and turn not away thy eyes from the poor."¹ The Holy Scriptures are replete with admonitions to aid and comfort the poor. We need but read the book of Ecclesiasticus or the book of Tobias. And was not the life

¹ Ecclesiasticus iv. 1.

of Our Saviour consecrated to the poor? Behold the men He chose to be His disciples; behold Him exercising the powers of omnipotence to feed the poor. And His spoken word, has it not ever been in praise of those who aided the needy? "Give alms, and behold all things are clean unto you."¹

But although the priest should himself be a "cheerful giver," and should urge this duty upon others, it is also incumbent upon him to secure the proper distribution of charities. "The St. Vincent de Paul Society in every parish" should be the American priest's slogan in behalf of our poor.

But we also have our diocesan charities, orphan asylums, infant homes, and homes for aged poor. The priest can do no less in their behalf than to urge his people with all the eloquence at his command to give freely and unstintingly to these institutions. But he can do more, he can propose to his wealthy parishioners "to lay up in store for themselves a good

¹ Luke xi. 41.

foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the true life.”¹

Let the priests of America establish, in all cities, branches of the St. Vincent de Paul Society and personally guide the society's work in their parishes; let them bring home to the poor that God loves them, that His Church will help them to bear their misfortune patiently, in the hope of a better life to come; let them impress upon America and upon the world that they are the best friends of the poor, and half the battle against socialism and anarchy is won.

¹ Timothy vi. 19.

CHAPTER XIX

RESTORER OF THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

EVEN as Humanism, beginning in about the thirteenth century, took a firm grip upon Italy and subsequently spread throughout the then-known world, so in our own day a new Humanism has occupied the minds, the hearts, and the homes of people everywhere. This new Humanism may be called worldliness. And just as the Humanism that reached its height in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries exercised a most baneful influence on the Christian family, so, too, the new Humanism is driving God and religion out of the Christian homes.

When in 1458 the Turkish hordes seized Constantinople and put an end to the Greek empire, some of the better educated Greeks found their way into Italy, bringing with them the pagan literature and works of pagan art.

The enthusiasm for the ancient classics had already seized root in Italy, as is evident from the writings of Dante, and even more so in the efforts of Petrarch. But with the advent of Grecian fugitives, and the wholesale importation of pagan books and works of art, the enthusiasm for everything pagan knew no bounds. This Humanism gradually spread throughout the world, and penetrated everywhere where there were schools and universities.

The effect upon the Christian family was soon apparent. The study of the Scriptures and of things Christian was soon forgotten by the educated, instead the study of the pagan classics was substituted. Religious pictures were banished from the homes of the cultured, and the undraped figures of the gods and goddesses of ancient Greece usurped their place. This worship of everything pagan could not have any but an unwholesome influence upon the Christian family.

And what about the new Humanism, world-

liness? We see it everywhere. The moving-picture craze is but one phase of it. Observe the increased demand for amusement and for entertainment, the frivolousness and lascivity in the styles of women's clothing. Note the lack of appetite for good literature, the absence of religious pictures in many homes. You can go from house to house in any of our cities and you will not find a religious picture in the homes of non-Catholics. And what is more to be lamented, is the fact that many of our so-called better class Catholics scrupulously avoid hanging a crucifix or a religious picture in any part of the house where they may be seen. This worldliness has destroyed the Catholic family in many quarters.

Another reason for the lowering of the standard of Christianity in the home has been the encroachment made on it by Industry. To-day everything we use is made or prepared in factories, and very often the hand of a girl or woman guides the intricate machinery. This wholesale requisitioning of girls, at an age

when they should be training for the great duties of motherhood, has contributed not a little toward robbing the home of its Christian character. When the long day in the factory is done, these girls rush out to seek relaxation and amusement. They fill the dance-halls and theaters, the "nickellets" and concert-halls. But at what time in the day do they hear or see anything of religion? Even the Sundays are given over in part to the pursuit of worldliness.

The present day factory-girls are the future mothers and house-wives. It can readily be seen what influence the new Humanism will exert upon the future Christian family. Love alone will not sustain the man and woman joined in wedlock. The happiness of young love withers almost as soon as the bridal bouquet. Then come the difficulties, disappointments, and sorrows. But then there is need of a greater sustaining power than human love. It is, and must be, religion.

The family does not consist of man and wife alone, but also of children. Never was truer

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word spoken than, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." The future citizenry of our country is dependent upon the mothers of to-day. If these mothers are filled with the spirit of worldliness a worldly, pleasure-loving, infidel race will populate America.

But what can the priest do to counteract the new Humanism? What can he do to restore the Christian family? He cannot abolish the theaters and dance-halls, he cannot put himself in the way of the progress of industry. True, he cannot do away with the host of innovations, fads, and fancies that go to make up modern social life, but he can do much to neutralize their pernicious effects on the Christian family.

The Holy Ghost, through Pope Pius X, has given the priest a most efficacious antidote, for the poisons of our times in the practice of frequent Holy Communion. Every girl in the parish should be a member of the sodality, and should be urged to approach the Banquet of Love not only monthly, but, if possible, weekly and even daily. Mothers' societies in the

parish offer the priest the opportunity to instruct mothers in their duties toward husband and children. The opportunity is also offered here to bring home to mothers the necessity of Catholic literature in the home. Instructions on the significance and purpose of religious pictures and emblems will help to restore the Christian character to the home.

The occasion will also present itself when the priest can educate and instruct fathers and mothers in the noble duties of parenthood. Let us lead our Catholic fathers and mothers back to the hearths of our forefathers. Those were humble homes, perhaps, but homes where the spirit of God dwelt. Prayers before and after meals, the Angelus, the rosary in common after the evening meal, readings from the Lives of the Saints—these were the little things that made for ideal Christian families.

Above all, the pastor should provide for the spiritual strengthening of fathers and mothers. He should never tire of urging them to frequent holy Communion. He should from

time to time hold triduums for parents; and finally, he should provide for them healthy, living societies.

History has seen the glory and greatness of Greece and Rome perish through immorality; and history will see the downfall of America, unless the sanctity and stability of the family are maintained. For on the knee of the mother the weal or woe of the nation is prepared. But the American family without religion and filled with worldliness can never save the nation. If America is to remain a great and powerful nation the Christian family must be restored. We cannot hope for this restoration from other quarters, so, again, the tremendous task of perpetuating America falls upon the Catholic Church. And the American priest will not only perform his duty as a priest and shepherd of his flock, but he will also be acting according to the highest conception of patriotism, if he is untiring in his efforts to restore and preserve the Christian character of the family.

CHAPTER XX

GUARDIAN OF THE SANCTUARY

THE active, the zealous American priest discovers a great field of labor extending before him. And in the midst of his labors he often is tempted to lose confidence in mankind, to relax in his efforts for fear of their futility. In such dismal hours the priest has only One to Whom he should take recourse, his Lord and Master in the tabernacle. Surely, when our Divine Lord instituted the Sacrament of His Love He must have had in mind that His Presence in the Holy Eucharist would be a source of sweet consolation to His priests. And when the priest, in those awful hours of disappointment, failure, or ingratitude, finds his way to the sanctuary, what a weight is lifted from his heart! The fire of the divine love of the Sacred Heart bursts forth from the taber-

nacle and warms the heart of the priest. And even as Moses descended from the mountain enveloped in an aureole of heavenly light, so, too, the priest goes forth from his solitary communion with his Master, refined, illumined, radiant with the love of God.

To the priest the Real Presence must ever be the source of the profoundest joy and happiness. The unshaken belief in the Holy Eucharist must also bring home to him the conviction that he is the guardian of the sanctuary, that he is called upon to make the dwelling-place of his Master the living evidence of his faith. It offends one's sense of propriety to see the parish rectory fitted out with the most expensive floor-coverings and articles of furniture, to be confronted in every room of the rectory with gewgaws and unnecessary articles of great value, whilst the sanctuary is neglected.

Worn and faded carpets in the sanctuary may be a mark of poverty, if the same or an inferior class of goods is to be found in the

rectory. Altars need not be constructed of marble, but they should not be of less valuable material than the furniture in the priest's home. Vestments and sacred vessels should have as much care as the articles that are distinctly for personal use.

Then, again, the conduct of the priest in the sanctuary and in church gives evidence of his belief in the nearness of God in the Blessed Sacrament. We sometimes allow ourselves liberties in church which we would not tolerate in the faithful. Loud laughter, unnecessary talking, jesting, and irreverent actions, may all be ascribed to thoughtlessness. But do we ever stop to think what effect such conduct may have upon those to whom we have tried to bring home the sublime truth of God's presence in the Sacrament of the Altar? Does it ever occur to us that non-Catholics, who may be witnesses of our irreverent words and actions, may be influenced thereby, and take home with them the conviction that we ourselves do not believe what we preach? The sanctuary is our

Holy of Holies, the hallowed spot where angels fear to tread.

As guardians of the sanctuary, and keepers of the Sacred Fire that burns in the tabernacle, another obvious duty is ours. The Saviour is present there mainly to be the food and nourishment of pilgrim Christians. He is present there to be a source of strength to those dear children of God who remain faithful to Him in a godless world. It should ever be the priest's greatest joy and cherished privilege to give to the people their Master in holy Communion.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus has said: "My love for men is so great that My Heart can scarcely contain it." Shall the priests of America prevent the souls confided to their care from becoming partakers of this unbounded love? Shall we determine how often our people may approach the Holy Table, when the Vicar of Christ has urged them to come every day? Shall we deny the little children their birthright, their right to preserve

their innocence and their simple faith in the Sacred Heart of Jesus?

America has sinned grievously against God, and is sinning grievously every hour of the day. We have seen the avenging hand of God descend upon other nations; can we hope to go unpunished for our crimes? God may spare our beloved country from the terrible punishment that has fallen upon other peoples; but if He does spare us, it will be due only to the reparation rendered to the Sacred Heart of Jesus by the priests of America united with their people in loving veneration of the Holy Eucharist.

THE END

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